CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for persisting an offline address book, the method comprising representing textual information in a format, wherein the format allows for representation of greater than 256 characters using 8-bit character widths.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the offline address book's underlying file format remains unaltered.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the offline address book's underlying representation remains unaltered.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein low level string comparisons with the offline address book are able to be performed.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the format is UTF-8.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the offline address book is MAPI compliant.

7.   A computer-readable medium containing instructions for performing a method for persisting an offline address book, the method comprising representing textual information in a format, wherein the format allows for representation of greater than 256 characters using 8-bit character widths.

8.   A method for displaying an offline address book, the method comprising:

accepting textual information from the offline address book in a format, wherein the format allows for representation of greater than 256 characters using 8-bit character widths;

converting the textual information to a corresponding character set; and

posting the converted textual information to an output mechanism.

9.   The method of claim 8 wherein the offline address book's underlying file format remains unaltered.

10.   The method of claim 8 wherein the offline address book's underlying representation remains unaltered.

11.   The method of claim 8 wherein low level string comparisons with the offline address book are able to be performed.

12.   The method of claim 8 wherein the format is UTF-8.

13.   The method of claim 8 wherein the offline address book is MAPI compliant.

14.   A computer-readable medium containing instructions for performing a method for

displaying an offline address book, the method comprising:

accepting textual information from the offline address book in a format, wherein

the format allows for representation of greater than 256 characters using 8-bit

character widths;

converting the textual information to a corresponding character set; and

posting the converted textual information to an output mechanism.

15.   A method for searching an offline address book, the method comprising:

accepting a first textual information from the offline address book in a format,

wherein the format allows for representation of greater than 256 characters using

8-bit character widths;

accepting a second textual information in a native character set representation;

converting the first textual information to a corresponding character set; and

comparing the converted first textual information to the second textual

information.

16.   The method of claim 15 wherein the offline address book's underlying file format

remains unaltered.

17.   The method of claim 15 wherein the offline address book's underlying

       representation remains unaltered.

18.   The method of claim 15 wherein low level string comparisons with the offline

       address book are able to be performed.

19.   The method of claim 15 wherein the format is UTF-8.

20.   The method of claim 15 wherein the offline address book is MAPI compliant.

21.   A computer-readable medium containing instructions for performing a method for

       searching an offline address book, the method comprising:

       accepting a first textual information from the offline address book in a format,

       wherein the format allows for representation of greater than 256 characters using

       8-bit character widths;

       accepting a second textual information in a native character set representation;

       converting the first textual information to a corresponding character set; and

       comparing the converted first textual information to the second textual

       information.